

CHRISTIANITY and CRISIS

A Christian Journal of Opinion

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NOV 1 1960

PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION
& EDUCATION

Campaigning and Foreign Policy: Precision vs. Politics

Few men in either political camp would quarrel with President Eisenhower's conclusion that "there is no alternative to peace." Both political parties are doubtless vividly aware that the sword of destruction hangs over mankind.

The bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki had an explosive equivalent of 20,000 tons of TNT (20 kilotons); thermonuclear devices presently available carry 20,000,000 tons of TNT (20 megatons). The latter possess a lethal radius of eight miles and an area of total destruction of forty-eight square miles. If an enemy launched a successful attack on fifty of our metropolitan centers, at least forty per cent of the population, fifty per cent of key facilities and sixty per cent of industry could be critically damaged. It would be surprising indeed if both sides in the American election were not sensitive to the need for serious effort to reduce the threat of nuclear war.

Thus far Senator John F. Kennedy, representing the party of opposition, has outlined his views more sharply, although he has been less specific than some might wish. The Senator is reportedly concerned that so few qualified men in government have addressed themselves to disarmament. He has urged a far more substantial national effort aimed at exploring the elements that would go into any arms agreement.

Vice President Richard M. Nixon would apparently expect Henry Cabot Lodge to assume major responsibility for non-military aspects of foreign policy, including disarmament, if the Republicans should be elected this November. Both parties have warned that Chairman Khrushchev's recent behavior has not increased the prospects of agreement. The Democrats, however, are slightly more hopeful that preconditions for at least partial disarmament may be created.

Winston Churchill on more than one occasion enjoined the West "to arm in order to parley." The United States has been slow to accept the relationship between military power and diplomacy. Critics of the Eisenhower administration such as General Maxwell D. Taylor insist that the ratio of the military efforts of the United States to Gross National Product is about one-half that of the Soviet Union. Other observers including the Governor of New York point to our economy's annual rate of growth and compare it unfavorably to that of the Soviet Union.

Both political platforms seem to recognize the importance of "accelerating" (Republican platform) the defense program and achieving a more impressive rate of growth. Yet the candidates, while recognizing that foreign policy is the controlling issue, have preferred to conduct the dis-

Vol. XX, No. 18, October 31, 1960 \$5.00 per year; 25 cents a copy

cussion at a level of broad generalities, leaving unanswered a host of questions clustering around the general principles.

Political considerations doubtless weigh heavily in both political camps. The Vice President must defend the President and his record while demonstrating that, far from smug complacency, he is profoundly aware of dangerous uncertainties in the outside world. He has met this challenge, imperfectly at best, by arguments from experience. In troubled waters the country must remain with a leader who for eight years has been at the helm with the President.

Much has been said about "standing up" to Khrushchev, and some of the popularity of both Mr. Nixon and Mr. Lodge stems from the public image of "men who talk back to the Russians." Yet the annals of diplomacy suggest that leaders who were merely equipped to meet charge with counter-charge had little success in charting more peaceful and orderly relationships among nations. Moreover, the world forum at the United Nations tests a nation's mettle in shaping constructive programs for peace more severely than at any time in history.

Senator Kennedy for his part has felt constrained to score broad, sweeping points without opening himself to criticism by advancing proposals drawn with greater precision and restraint. He has charged that we suffer from a far-reaching loss of prestige in every continent and from military and economic weakness on every front. While implying that we must some day deal with Khrushchev, he has been careful not to supply examples to those who might wish to convict him of appeasement. He would have the United States draw increasingly closer to revolutionary nationalism around the world, but he abstains from considering how this can be done without losing friends and allies in Europe.

It would be tempting to say that one candidate finds nothing to criticize or improve in America's position, while the other insists in perhaps too sweeping terms that we have failed to solve the world's problems not because we could not but because we would not do so. Governor Stevenson may have been guilty of painting the world crisis in too agonizing terms and placing a heavier burden on the citizenry than it was willing to bear. Yet, from an opposite fault, the present candidates may fail to arouse public interest through formulations that are too simple.

Or is it possible that attention and participation

in mass democracies are inevitably half-hearted, and political arguments that reach the target must be framed against a lowest common denominator of interest and concern? Is it possible that, except for moments of great national turmoil, the electorate chooses out of its background of traditional party loyalties and family commitments or because a national hero upsets and takes over these loyalties? Do the policy proposals of the candidates make any difference?

The coming weeks should provide an answer. The forthcoming debate on foreign policy may find both contenders coming forward with serious and viable programs.* There are new frontiers that call for clarity and precision of thought on disarmament, colonialism, the U. N., foreign aid and Soviet-American relations. The United States might propose new initiatives in the United Nations. We might answer the challenge of the five neutral leaders by proceeding through normal diplomatic channels, though not at the Summit, to test Mr. Khrushchev's intentions.

We could channel more foreign aid through the U. N. or launch a bold program for Africa giving the President authority to make large commitments there at his discretion and at the price of some national sacrifice for us all. We might indicate the issues on which we would negotiate with the Russians and others that are not discussable. We could list the conditions under which more orderly relations with Far Eastern countries could be established or the preconditions for new policies in the Middle East.

Yet political strategists may find such a course of action too fraught with perils. They may choose to depend on long-standing political loyalties, or the public's confidence that one candidate or the other will rally strong men to serve with him, or on sharp and strident appeals to emotions as against reason. If so, precision on the great issues of foreign policy must await the gray morning of decision that follows the voter's verdict. A candidate who knows he has not done justice to the problems we face can reassure himself they will be there to greet him—no less perplexing and baffling than at present—when he assumes the most awesome responsibility any man could seek.

K. W. T.

* This editorial was written by Dr. Thompson prior to leaving on a trip to Japan and prior to the second debate. In that debate substantial differences on foreign policy developed between the candidates.

KHRUSHCHEV AND THE UNITED NATIONS

OUR AMERICAN journals have been preoccupied with the virtuosity of Premier Khrushchev's public and private performance in New York and at the U. N. General Assembly. They have noted the revelation of the resources of the dictator-demagogue with his contradictory moods—in one moment genial and jovial, giving the Cuban revolutionist Castro a bear hug at his Harlem hotel or good-naturedly ribbing reporters from the balcony of the Russian embassy, and in the next moment making his ruthless attack on U. N. Secretary General Hammarskjöld.

The Premier threatened the destruction of the U. N. itself with his outrageous scheme for a triumvirate in place of the Secretary General. The proposal was irresponsible. It was probably not seriously meant, for it was not accompanied by concrete proposals. Indeed, since it would have required a charter revision, the Russian boss probably intended only to show his displeasure because the U. N. statesmanship frustrated his well-laid scheme for gaining a foothold in the Congo, to match the foothold he had gained in Cuba.

But in our journalistic preoccupations with the demagogic antics of this very shrewd politician (who is also something of a ham actor) we have probably missed the purpose of his visit and the success he has achieved in pursuing it. His most striking success was in wooing the neutrals. This success was manifested most vividly in the neutralist resolution asking for a Khrushchev-Eisenhower meeting. Prime Minister Nehru's championing of this resolution—even after it was apparent that neither the Russian nor the American leader would meet and that, in any case, its adoption by the General Assembly would have been an embarrassment to us after the Russian's insulting remarks about the President—was in a sense the most disturbing aspect of the Russian's success in identifying himself with the neutralist bloc.

Mr. K.'s second great success was in exploiting the China issue. It was necessary to do this to give a vivid manifestation of his devotion to China, reputedly somewhat restive under his heterodox versions of Leninism. Our own sterile China policy enhanced his triumph. We still persist in regarding the United Nations as a conventicle of the "good" or "peace-loving" nations, a thesis that stands in contradiction to our indictment of that very important member of the U. N., Russia. Our European allies are increasingly critical of our China policy. The neutral nations do not like it. Sig-

nificantly, the representative of the most impressive new African nation, Nigeria, voted against us, after her Prime Minister made the most effective anti-Communist speech in the whole assembly.

But the most striking success of the Russian leader was not immediately apparent. It was in setting the stage for another summit meeting, suggesting that Prime Minister Macmillan had assured him of the probability of such a meeting, and then presenting his threat that if no agreement were reached a separate peace treaty with East Germany would follow.

The fact is that Khrushchev has been calling the tune at every turn of the international crisis. This does not mean that he is not honest in wanting to avoid a nuclear war. He is probably so active and seemingly contradictory because he must impress the Chinese with his toughness and the neutral nations with his fervent desire for peace.

The international situation has become darker since the meeting of the U. N. General Assembly, but there is no cause for despair since a nuclear catastrophe has not come appreciably nearer. Yet no old problems have been moved toward a solution. One could wish that our side had as shrewd, if not as tough, a player on its team as the redoubtable Mr. K.

R. N.

CHINA CANNOT BE IGNORED

PRIME MINISTER NEHRU declares that the 1960 vote in the General Assembly of the United Nations will be "the last" against the admission of China to the international body. Henry Cabot Lodge, long the United States' spokesman on this issue, insists that China can "never" enter against the will of this country, since a two-thirds vote would be required for such a change. At least one of these prophets will be in trouble, even if we allow some discount from each statement as coming from a campaigner. But the chief concern of Americans, and of many others who are anxious as to how American responsibility is carried and American power is directed, is the conscience and wisdom by which "the will of this country" is formed and expressed.

Mr. Lodge is an able man, who has effectively served American policy in the forum of the United Nations. His statement, however, avoids mention of those who joined the Communist states against the American stand, not merely important Asian and African states but also the four Scandinavian countries, making the largest number ever tallied thus; and the decline of the group voting

with us to forty-three per cent of the total vote: for, against, and declared abstentions. "Respect for the decent opinions of mankind" reinforces our desire to ascertain whether we are on good ground.

Sane policy must take account of realities, some of them distressing, and seek to move toward their betterment. What realities China-ward?

(1) The most portentous gulf in the world today, measured ideologically or in the hostile confrontations of major nations, is that between the Communist left wing called China and the non-Communist right wing called the United States. One of the threats not often recognized in the utter opposition of these two nations is that its starkness makes the Soviet-American contest—which as of today is more immediately frightening in nuclear power poised for launching—appear comparatively benign. Since the Chinese talk more violently than the Russians (1960 edition), perhaps our anxiety about the latter can be relaxed—this is the unexpressed and dangerous line of inference.

(2) Even though the Chinese military potential is still far below the Russian and cannot at this time directly imperil the United States, it adjoins and points toward critical lines where the United States has affirmed a position, notably in Korea, Vietnam, Taiwan, and—by qualified extension—even to waters and islands still nearer than Taiwan to the shores of China. Moreover, although there have been marginal contacts between the Chinese and the American Governments, as regards the Korea and Vietnam armistices and the question of prisoners, these have been so stiffly limited in advance by the positions taken on both sides that they scarcely reduce the distance between the two countries.

(3) The fiction that Taiwan represents China is increasingly offensive to fact. The real issue posed by Taiwan is not whether its rulers can regain from a formidable Chinese regime the power that they could not hold against a Communist movement far less strong, but whether Taiwan can be indefinitely maintained, by external power, against the marshalled Chinese nation, sixty-five times as populous. The Taiwan Government imperils its only foreseeable future by insisting that the Peking regime is not "China," but that Taiwan itself is "China," a charter member of the Security Council; and by hanging on to the off-shore islands, even those in the very harbor of a major Chinese port.

Few Americans want to see Taiwan added to the Communist empire. Taiwan itself, and in a quali-

fied measure the islands also, have been guaranteed by the United States, amid devastating worries on the part of some of the officers who know that they might, in the onrush of a typhoon, be called upon to make good the guarantee, among conflicting political judgments in Washington, New York and Europe, and in the simultaneous necessity of a military showdown in Europe.

(4) Another reality is also tremendous and most difficult for the eyes of those utopians who assume that a simple reversal of the American stand and a welcome to China spoken from the United Nations would create peace. The reality in point is the threat that China poses, by revolutionary and imperial intent, by propaganda and insurrection, by economic power and by possible military intervention, to all of Eastern and Southern Asia. Any evident yielding to Chinese desires and ambitions would cause politicians to doubt whether, in a pinch, their states would or could be defended, with damage to the morale and even to the stability of state after state. Moreover, China has passed over many chances to appear conciliatory, even to India, while hardening into almost constitutional anti-Americanism, which extends to contemptuous indifference toward a United Nations in which the United States is influential.

What is to be done? Turn our minds more adequately from illusion and toward realities. Seek, in continuous consultation with friends and neutrals, the gradual opening of doors toward "normal" relations with China, always coupled with Chinese adjustments and pledges reducing the outstanding strains in East and South Asia. No quick or sure relief is in sight. But moralistic rigidity and exclusion can only perpetuate and intensify the present peril.

The one real hope is for prudence or relaxation on the part of China. A climate favorable for such change will be fostered neither by irresponsible appeasement nor by implacable American hostility. Tangible hopes are slight; obvious problems are forbidding. But the alternative to watchfulness and persistence toward *mutual* adjustment is utterly hopeless.

It is significant that a statement approved in August by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches looked toward sharing with the Chinese nation both the *benefits* and the *responsibilities* of the international community. Certain anti-communist zealots, including several prominent churchmen, under the banner of the "Committee of One Million Against the Admis-

sion of Communist China," attacked this statement as "inconsistent with . . . the clear principles of morality and Christian faith."

More may be at stake than we can know in the struggle between these two attitudes. When a restrained and careful statement, approved by all the cautious ecclesiastical dignitaries in the Central Committee save only two who are Russian ex-

patriates, is denounced with such self-righteous vehemence, one is compelled to challenge the motivation of those who wrote the attack, and the discretion of those who allowed their names to be used with it.

China is still there. A decade of reckless words in America and in Taiwan has not moved it.

M. S. B.

Dramatic Art and Public Morality

TOM F. DRIVER

THE RISE of popular interest in the arts in America has been notable since World War II. In fact, to study and talk about the arts has in many places become so faddish that not a few thoughtful persons (and some not so thoughtful) have begun to ask whether the ethical side of life is not in danger of being slighted.

Prevailing theories of aesthetics and literary criticism set aside the view of classical aesthetics that art is an instructor of morals. They hold that the work of art is an end in itself and that if it has a connection with morality that connection is indirect. A work of art is, in Denis de Rougemont's phrase, "a trap for meditation." Meanwhile, say those who guard the public conscience, there are practical and ethical problems facing us, and the arts distract the public's attention from them.

It is my purpose to discuss one aspect of the question of the relation of art to public morality. I shall do so with primary reference to the theater, which it is frequently my task to analyze, though much of the discussion would apply to the other arts also.

Many persons today are saying that our theater is not sufficiently moral. Their complaints generally take one, or both, of two forms. Some hold that the American theater is too much given to depictions of personal depravity and weakness. Robert Fitch has expressed himself on that subject in *Christianity and Crisis* and elsewhere. Similar criticisms directed at novelists are to be heard from Edmund Fuller, and J. Donald Adams of *The New York Times Book Review*.

The most vigorous voice among this group is that of Marya Mannes. Writing in *The New York Times Magazine* of May 29, 1960, Miss Mannes asked with disdain and impatience why the theater-

going public paid good money to spend its evenings "in the company of addicts, perverts, sadists, hysterics, bums, delinquents, and others afflicted in mind and body." She concluded that either "the wide gap between our public concepts of morality and our private practices [has] made us a prurient people in need of 'acceptable' kicks," or that "we have become so used to the various sicknesses within our society that only shocks will jolt us into attention."

Her scorn for various offerings of the 1959-1960 season fell upon such diverse plays as *Sweet Bird of Youth*, *Toys in the Attic*, *Caligula*, *The Andersonville Trial*, *Gypsy*, *The Connection*, *The Balcony*, *Krapp's Last Tape*, *There Was a Little Girl*, and *The Cool World*. She approved of *The Miracle Worker*, *The Tenth Man* and *My Fair Lady*. She wrote:

It is significant that both of our two most gifted playwrights, Williams and Lillian Hellman, have chosen to explore snake pits, or, rather to open the basket and pipe the tune that would draw the reptiles out into the gaze of a repelled but hypnotized public.

Miss Mannes deplored the tendency to depict characters who have lost their strength of will. Excusing Shakespeare, William Gibson and Paddy Chayevsky for their representations of vice by saying that they do, after all, end up affirming something, she called for plays that would represent "a balance between the good and bad in us."

Interdependence of Material and Manner

To criticisms of this kind two major objections are to be registered. The first is that the approach confounds the problems facing any critic (and also, one hopes, the public) because it jumbles together works of vastly disparate literary worth. The problem of true import is the relation of

Dr. Driver, a member of the Editorial Board, is radio station WBAI in New York City. His reviews have appeared in the *New Republic* and *The Christian Century*.

dramatic *art* to the welfare of society. The question of what to do about trash is another matter.

One notes that persons professedly concerned about the immorality of hack work such as *The Cool World* rarely have much to say about the comparable or worse fare that is to be found on every paperback bookshelf in the drugstores or in the movie "grind houses" along 42nd Street, which reaches a much larger audience. The fact that a worthless play is found on Broadway, where the prices are high, does not mean necessarily that it deserves serious attention or that it is to be treated as something different from the trash that is available to a wider public elsewhere at lower prices.

Miss Mannes excuses herself from the responsibility of making literary judgments by saying that she is talking of "material, not manner," but this throws her back upon the assumption, which she does not examine, that material and manner are separable and that literary excellence has only to do with the skills of presentation and has nothing to do with the integration of material and manner. Yet anyone who has written a play knows that the separation of form and content is valid only at a certain stage of the creative process and that to write a really good play necessitates letting the material and the manner fuse in a way that modifies them both.

To encourage the public to ignore the interdependence of material and manner in a work of art is to befuddle the public and eventually to cripple its capacity to exercise discrimination. The approach is anti-aesthetic and, therefore, cannot contribute to the solution of the fundamental ethical problem at hand, which is to find the connection between aesthetic and ethical considerations.

The other objection to the sort of approach Miss Mannes exemplifies is that it skims the surface of the moral problems. She appeals to playwrights to balance the "good and bad" in their characters. We may agree that there is both good and bad in human nature, but to say that is to say almost nothing, for the real questions are: What is the nature of the bad in us? What is it that makes it bad? What is it that produces it? What hold upon us does it have?

Corresponding questions are to be asked about the good. The moralists who object to Tennessee Williams and even Albert Camus because they depict too much depravity and not enough virtue are in the position of saying that everyone already knows the nature of good and bad well enough, so that the only thing needed is to discourage the one and encourage the other. Such a view under-

cuts the whole enterprise of ethical study from Socrates to the present.

Oversimplifying the Dramatic Event

There is a second complaint often heard from those who feel that our theater is today not sufficiently moral. We are told that not enough attention is being given to particular social problems facing the nation—the race question, the threat of atomic war, the rise of the underdeveloped nations, etc. These criticisms often come from persons who feel that the most vigorous period in American drama was the period of the Thirties, when the social protest of Clifford Odets, John Howard Lawson, Paul Green and others plunged the theater into the struggle for social change.

It is easy to sympathize with this view, especially when those of us who were very young in the Thirties read Harold Clurman's *The Fervent Years* or Hallie Flanagan Davis' history of The Federal Theatre. But of course the truth is that we are not today living in a time like the Thirties, and when we read now the plays that stirred people then, they seem a little wooden. Moreover, if we look at the plays written recently that focus directly upon specific social problems we find that none of them measures up to our expectations for artistic excellence.

Dore Schary's *The Highest Tree* (about the atomic threat), Pearl Buck's *A Desert Incident* (a similar theme), Sol Stein's *A Shadow of My Enemy* (on the Alger Hiss-Whittaker Chambers story) were all quick failures. Even popular successes like *Sunrise at Campobello* and *A Raisin in the Sun*, though they won prizes, strike the student of drama as unoriginal works that miss the deeper elements of their subjects. With regard to the latter, criticism of which for a time put one in jeopardy of being branded a reactionary, it is significant to see that even the socially conscious John Howard Lawson has found it inadequate. He writes that it reveals "a lack of depth, an oversimplification of the dramatic event."

Mr. Lawson puts his finger on the difficulty one feels with most of the social-protest drama being written today. In addition to oversimplifying the dramatic event, it is usually too obvious; and it fails to set forth the social questions in the complexity with which they present themselves to the spectators in actual life.

For one thing, we have, I believe, moved past the day when it is sufficient for a playwright to argue for a "liberal" point of view. That point, at least for the audiences that go to the New York theaters, has largely been won. Thus it is no longer pertinent to try to make an audience feel that racial discrimination is wrong or that Negroes are basically similar to other people.

What is needed is investigation into the reasons why the opposition to an integrated society is so entrenched, what the strategies must be for rooting it out and, above all, what are the imperatives for change, and where is the courage to desire

change to be found. The latter point touches the heart of the matter. The true social crisis at the present time, especially in America, has to do with the decay of the ideologies that once encouraged social change. It has also to do with the disease that is spreading throughout the West, the primary symptom of which is paralysis of the will.

Those who criticize our theater on the grounds that it depicts too much depravity and that it pays too little attention to pressing social problems are not slow to point out that the characters in much of our drama lack heroic stature, that they suffer from defeatism, and that their wills are immobilized. The observation is true enough. But these critics usually assume that the solution to the problem lies in prodding the playwrights themselves to a greater assertion of will. It is not that simple.

Let us recognize immediately that almost all thoughtful students of the current theater are dissatisfied with its present moral state. It is from no lack of moral interest that critics have praised the work of Tennessee Williams, Lillian Hellman, Jack Gelber and others who seem to the bourgeois to be merchandisers of weakness and perversity. These writers have usually been praised because in them an artistic power has been seen to go hand in hand with a probing examination of certain aspects of our present life that are thought to be directly relevant to the moral questions of the day.

If there is a criticism to be made of our present theater (and it would apply to many of the other arts as well) it is that our playwrights have not succeeded in visualizing what the moral dimensions of our present situation are. And neither have their critics.

The better playwrights are ahead of their detractors in recognizing that the moral assumptions of previous generation are no longer directly relevant to our situation. They know and have said with clarity that, whatever the complacencies of middle-class life, we are all floundering. They need to go beyond that—we all need to go beyond it—but not, as some would have it, by a *return* to previous certainties but by an *advance* into territory so far uncharted. This necessitates examination of the society's fundamental values, to discover what it is in fact that we *do* believe in, since no moral action whatever can be predicated on what does not exist.

The Moral Question is Ontological

Therefore, the playwright's moral question is not, at this time, strictly a moral question but is rather an ontological one. What is there that is, on the one hand, real and that, on the other hand, shapes human destiny? Arthur Miller has faced this question, but he is trapped philosophically in a kind of pragmatic Marxism that even he himself recognizes is insufficient. Tennessee Williams, has faced it, but his answer to the question—that the basic reality is death—is so repugnant to the liberal mind that he is pilloried for it. Thorn-

ton Wilder has faced it, but although his positive answer appeals to many, the facts of natural and human evil undercut his mystical assumptions. Archibald MacLeish started to face it in *J. B.* but flinched before he was through, or maybe before he began. Almost no other American playwright has come near to seeing the problem. Numerous playwrights on the European continent are aware of it—Brecht, Beckett, Ionesco, Duerenmatt, de Ghelderode, Sartre, Camus and Genet, to mention only a few.

What is needed is a theater that is not afraid of metaphysics. I do not, of course, mean plays that discuss metaphysics. I mean plays that present their actions in such a way that they suggest to the audience a comprehensive world view, which the audience will recognize either as consonant with its own or as a challenge to its own. I mean plays that find and utilize what Francis Ferguson calls "the shared images of human life." It is the lack of such shared images that produces our present moral chaos.

Now the artist cannot cut a society's "shared images" out of whole cloth. He may, on occasion, shape them in a way that seems prophetic, and he ought to be bold both in attempting that and in challenging the society's received opinions. But he cannot inject a metaphysical assumption into a society that has no basis for it already. Thus the playwright is dependent upon other thinkers in society.

Here some responsibility falls upon the theological community. Though recent Protestant theology has been exceedingly vigorous, it has not, to my mind, made notable strides in the subjects that are the ground of ethics. Along with existential philosophy it has laid great stress upon the importance of individual *decision* as the basis of action. It has learned from Kierkegaard much about inwardness. But it has not succeeded in bridging the chasm between the realities implied in inwardness and the realities implied by terms such as "history" and "world view."

Is it not true, for instance, that Niebuhr's *The Nature and Destiny of Man* has been much more influential in what it had to say about the nature of man than in what it had to say about his destiny? Yet the artist, and especially the dramatist, cannot avoid the question of destiny, since he is dealing with actions, and actions are either meaningful or meaningless according to whether they do or do not participate in action in its broadest sense, that is, action on the historical and cosmological scene, which is what we mean by destiny.

Protestant theology in recent years has neglected the doctrine of Creation. This neglect is another corollary of its stress upon inwardness. Yet without much to say about Creation, without a structure of thought that takes nature seriously, theology is of little value to the artist, whose whole vocation consists of working with the materials given to him in nature. We can expect no ethical seriousness from the artist, let alone an ethical stance of which we would approve, if in theology and phi-

losophy the thinking about ethics is divorced from the thinking about the structures of the natural world.

The problem of morality in the theater will not show much advance until some influential group in the society begins to speak authoritatively about human destiny. If such a voice is to come from the Church, we are dependent upon the theological community to speak new words about the doctrine of Creation and about the sovereignty that the God of Creation exercises here and now over the events of history. For it is from a want of assurance in these areas, and even a want of assurance in any secular substitutes for them, that our theater yields so few images of life that evoke in us an ethical response.

Meanwhile it must not be assumed that the cultivation of the arts may be divorced from the study of ethics. Many of the best dramatists are telling us that the bases for action and decision are crumbling. Are not those of us who decry America's lack of vigorous political leadership and the public's insensitivity to the crisis of the day saying more guardedly the very same thing?

EDITORIAL NOTE

The response to our editorial "The Roman Catholic 'Issue' Again" (Sept. 19 issue) indicates that some persons who read it felt that it implied that all who raise the Catholic issue in any form are guilty of using it as a cloak to cover other reasons for opposing Senator Kennedy. Actually, no such thing was said or intended in the editorial.

The editorial said that those who had taken leadership in the National Conference of Citizens for Religious Freedom meeting in Washington on September 7 would have opposed a liberal Democrat, whatever his religion. It also stated that the same would be true of much of the agitation in

Texas and other Southern states. This is not likely to be disputed.

On the other hand, we have always held that it is appropriate to ask a Catholic candidate what his views are on the relations between Church and State, and on other matters such as birth control as an element in a foreign aid program. We believe, therefore, that there are many Protestants who raise real issues and are not influenced either by bigotry or economic conservatism.

Some of the most thoughtful letters received reflect the pressure of a Catholic majority upon a Protestant minority in a local situation. We appreciate the fact that such situations do exist. It is not relevant, however, to project this local situation onto the national level if a liberal Catholic laymen should become President. The issues that cause local concern are usually decided at the state level and rarely come to the desk of the President. Furthermore, a President who wants to be free from any particular form of pressure can take advantage of a situation in which there are so many pressures and counter-pressures. A local politician, even if he wants to be free, is less fortunate.

Many of the letters received from non-Catholics who read about the editorial in the press were quite angry in tone. Those from our subscribers, when they have been critical, have been written more in sorrow than in anger; sometimes they have been based upon a misunderstanding of our intent against which we should have guarded more carefully.

J. C. B.

Christmas in October?

Well, hardly. But we want you to know that a paperback copy of *Facing Protestant-Roman Catholic Tensions* will be sent as a free gift to your friends with every Christmas gift subscription. One year: \$4.00, additional gifts at \$3.50; Six months: \$2.50, additional gifts at \$2.25. Add \$1.50 for a clothbound book (regularly \$2.50).

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